

## A Dry Chronicle of the Purge

Summary Executions in Certain Communes of Charente Limousine

### Robert Faurisson

*In the course of the 1960's and the beginning of the '70's, Robert Faurisson began an investigation of the Purge (French: Epuration), limited to those summary executions which took place in the summer of 1944 in a part of Charente known as Charente Limousine, or Confolentais. This meticulous study was to have been published under the title A Dry Chronicle of 78 Days of the Purge in Certain Communes of Confolentais.*

*The difficulties Professor Faurisson encountered in his other inquiry, into the gas chambers and the genocide, prevented him from completing his work on the Purge. In no way prejudicing the possibility of future publication of the full Chronicle, the French Revisionist journal Revue d'histoire révisionniste (no. 4) published in spring 1991 several excerpts from the uncompleted work. The Journal of Historical Review, accordingly, thanks Professor Faurisson and the Revue for enabling us to bring portions of this important (and much neglected) chapter of the history of the Second World War to American readers.*

*Professor Faurisson has catalogued the executions attributable to two maquis, or guerrilla bands, that held sway over the southern part of Confolentais and made occasional incursions into the extreme west of the department of Haute-Vienne. The maquis "Bernard" and the maquis "Chabanne" are the two maquis in question. The first, a Communist maquis, was a force in the environs of Chabanais-sur-Charente; the second was socialist, or centrist, and active around Chasseneuil-sur-Bonnieure. Chabanais and Chasseneuil are on RN 141, which runs from Angouême to Lîmoges.*

*The four extracts that follow are:*

- *A list of executions by the maquis "Bernard";*
- *"Executed in Her Wedding Gown," the story of Mlle. Armagnac, a victim of the maquis "Bernard";*
- *A list of executions by the maquis "Chabanne";*
- *"The Purge: From the Death of a Priest under Torture," the story of Father Heymès, a victim of the maquis "Chabanne."*

*The first extract was published, though with grave typographical errors, in Maurice Bardèche's monthly review Défense de l'Occident (July-August 1977, pp. 44-49).*

*The second extract, concerning Mlle. Armagnac, was communicated, along with much other information, to Henri Amouroux in January of 1988. The latter thereupon made substantial use of it in volume 8 of La Grande Histoire des Français sous l'Occupation, under the title "Joys and Sorrows of the Liberated People (6 June to 1 September 1944)" (printed 10 October 1988 by Robert Laffont). In the list of 575 persons to whom Henri Amouroux tenders his thanks, the name of Robert Faurisson is not included.*

*The third extract has never been published, but was sent to Henri Amouroux, who used it to some advantage.*

*The fourth extract appeared in Les Ecrits de Paris (March 1986, pp. 40-48) under the title "The Purge: From the Death of a Priest to Truncated Statistics [of the Purge]."*

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#### I. A List of Some Executions by the Maquis Bernard (15 June to 11 August 1944)

Responsibility for the executions by the Communist maquis "Bernard" rests with Bernard Lelay, a printer at *L'Humanité*, the daily newspaper of the French Communist Party, and with his followers. After Bernard Lelay, the person most directly implicated in the executions was Augustin Raoux, known as "Gandhi." A Jewish convert to Catholicism, Raoux was a solicitor at Ruffec. Assisted by his son Philippe, he directed the Deuxième Bureau (Security and Intelligence). He was both prosecutor and judge. The accused had no attorney, and there was no question of last rites for those condemned to death. The corpses were not put into coffins. The dead were not

restored to their families. Very expeditious, this maquis seldom used torture. Junien B., native of La Péruse, killed François Destempes by means of torture. Militiaman [1] Labuze was tortured at the rectory of Saint-Quentin and then shot.

Bernard Lelay died in 1975. In 1977, his ashes were removed to the crypt of the Memorial of the Resistance at Chasseneuil-sur-Bonnieure.

Among the 72 or 73 cases enumerated below, there are 14 women. Among them one who was executed in her wedding dress (see pp. below); and another, 22 years of age and the mother of two infants, who was shot even though she was 7 months pregnant. The oldest of those shot was a 77-year-old peasant; the youngest, a schoolboy 16 years of age.

The names followed by an asterisk are those of persons on behalf of whom their families, after the war, obtained the mention "Died for France."

(Before 15 June 1944, this maquis carried out executions in the forest of Rochebrune, near Étagnac. On 1 June: three German prisoners, an unnamed girl, and gendarmerie warrant officer Pierre-Léon Combas (\*); on 12 June: chauffeur Sylvain and watchmaker Vignéras. On the same day, two German railwaymen were killed at Roumazières; their dead bodies are still there on the estate of the château of Rochebrune, near Étagnac.

After 11 August 1944, the same maquis carried out many executions in regions other than the one of interest to us here, which is roughly that of the Pressac château, situated near Chabanais [Charente].)

- 15 June, *Mme. Chevalier*, St-Maurice-des-Lions, housewife, age 53.
- 17 June, *Mme. Beaumatin*, Exideuil, schoolteacher, age 33.
- 17 June, *Général Nadal*, Chantrezac, brigadier general, age 65.
- 17 June, *Marcel Nadal*, Chantrezac, student, age 22 (son of the above).
- 20 June, *Charles Besson*, Chabanais, school principal, age 46 (one or more of his former students were in the firing squad).
- 20 June, *Antoine de Cazes*, Verneuil, landowner, age 43.
- 20 June, *Charles Schwieck*, Verneuil, age 21.
- 20 June, 1 unnamed German soldier, Verneuil.
- 26 June, *Marie-Charles Soury-Lavergne*, Rochechouart, importer, age 74 (his wife will be executed on 24 July for having protested).
- 26 June, *Pierre V.*, St-Junien, worker, age 33 (member of the maquis accused of theft).
- 27 June, *Pierre*, also known as *Julien, Sardin*, La Péruse, carpenter (killed).
- 27 June, *Mme. Steiner*, Roumazières, housewife, age 41.
- 27 June, *Michel Steiner*, Roumazières, peddler, age 45.
- 27 June, *Jean Steiner*, Roumazières, laborer, age 20.
- 27 June, *Albert Steiner*, Roumazières, laborer, age 19.
- The last four persons mentioned and *Jean Bauer*, executed on 30 June, were members of one and the same family from Moselle.
- 28 June, *Auroyer* (no other information).
- 28 June, *Alfred Desplanques*, Suris, tenant farmer, age 43 (father of eight children).
- 30 June, *Mme. Gingeot*, St-Junien, bookseller, age 35 (found with both feet cut off after being strung up by the feet with wire).
- 30 June, *Marie-Louise Texeraud*, St-Junien, office worker, age 48.
- 30 June, *Henri Charles*, Roumazières, factory director, age 45.
- 30 June, *Serge Bienvenu*, Roumazières, accountant, age 39.
- 30 June, *Jean Bauer*, Roumazières, peddler (brother of Mme. Steiner), age 36.
- 4 July, *Régis Trillaud*, Roumazières, watchmaker, age 34.
- 4 July, *Gaston Louis*, Nice, detached guard of the Militia (conveying in a train a set of blankets).
- 4 July, *Raymond Auxire*, Confolens, age 19.
- 4 July, *Germain Demontoux*, St-Maurice-des-Lions, clerk, age 24.
- 4 July, *Georges Maillet*, St-Junien, workingman, age 42.
- 4 July, *Germaine Maillet*, St-Junien, housewife, age 33 (spouse of Georges Maillet).
- 5 July, *Maurice Verger*, Vayres, farmer, age 36.
- 5 July, *Françoise Armagnac*, bride of *Pénicaud*, Exideuil, age 26 (grandniece of Sadi Carnot, president of the Republic who was assassinated in 1894; arrested on 4 July by Nathan Lindner after the marriage mass; shot in her wedding dress).
- 6 July, 1 unknown male (body rolled up in a blanket at the foot of the prisoners tower of the Pressac chateau).
- 6 July, 1 unknown male (head smashed in; same place; confusion with the above?).
- 7 July, *Siméon Israel*, Manot, railroad employee, age 42.
- 9 July, *Mme Lévêque*, St-Laurent-de-Céris, housewife, age 65 ("the nurse").
- 10 July, *Auguste Sibert*, Loubert, livestock dealer, age 29.
- 11 July, *Henri Malga*, Rochechouart, workingman, age 43.
- 12 July, *Raoul Chevalier* (\*), Maisonnais, justice of the peace, age 60.
- 12 July, *Maurice Aubert*, Montemboeuf, notary, age 31.
- 12 July, *Jacques de Maillard*, Chassenon, landowner, age 50.
- 13 July, *Jean Jonquet*, Étagnac, restaurateur, age 63.
- 13 July, *François Destempes*, Chabanais, town clerk, age 49 (death by torture).
- 13 July, *Léonard*, alias *Adrien, Saumon* (\*), Maisonnais, maker of sabots (former mayor with socialist leanings).
- 16 July, 1 unknown male (body rolled in a blanket, in back of the château farmhouse).
- 16 July, *Pierre Carlin* (\*), Brigueil, miller of oil, age 25 (was a member of the Resistance network "Action R3").
- 16 July, *Mme. Noël*, St-Junien, nurse, age 35.

- 16 July, *Eugène Écoupeau*, Magnac-sur-Touvre, fitter, age 21.
- 18 July, *Mme. Baatsch*, Exideuil, housewife, age 45.
- 18 July, *Henri Fabre*, Roumazières, radio electrician, age 42.
- 18 July, 1 unknown young girl, came from Rouen.
- 18 July, *Pierre Sauviat*, Chabonais, retired gendarmerie warrant officer, age 61.
- 18 July, *Sylvain Vignaud*, Confolens, grain inspector, age 58.
- 20 July, *Gaston Devoyon*, Chabonais, carpenter, age 50.
- 20 July, *Amédée Devoyon*, Chabonais, carpenter, age 45 (brother of Gaston Devoyon).
- 21 July, *Ferdinand Gisson*, Chabonais, seed merchant, age 60 (deputy mayor; killed).
- 24 July, *Jean Codet-Boisse*, Oradour-sur-Vayres, lumber worker, age 28.
- 24 July, *Pierre Sadry*, Rochechouart, pastrycook, age 60.
- 24 July, *Mme. Soury-Lavergne*, Rochechouart, housewife, age 57 (husband executed on 26 June).
- 27 July, *Angel Besson*, Roussines, bus driver, age 24.
- 27 July, *Mme. Besson*, Roussines, housewife, age 22 (spouse of Angel Besson; mother of two young children; 7 months pregnant).
- 29 July, *Eugène Pannier*, Manot, landowner, age 54.
- 30 July, *Jacques Labuze*, St-Junien, medical studies completed, age 30.
- 30 July, *Mme. Lagarde*, Étagnac, housewife, age 24 ("la belle Manou").
- 31 July, *Yvon B.*, Limoges (?), age 17 (had denounced a maquis?).
- 4 August, *Paul Corbiat*, Montemboeuf, farmer-landholder, age 77.
- 4 August, *Jacques Londeix*, native of Bordeaux, schoolboy, age 16.
- 6 August, *Gustave Nicolas*, Chasseneuil, tradesman, age 47.
- 11 August, 1 unknown male (found 150 meters east of the cemetery of Vayres).
- 11 August, *René Barbier* (\*), Alloue, working landowner, age 37.
- 11 August, *Aloyse Fritz*, Rochechouart, gendarmerie warrant officer, age 43.
- 11 August, *Pierre Marot*, Rochechouart, gendarmerie warrant officer, age 34.
- 11 August, *Jeanne Lamothe*, Chantilly (Oise), stenographer typist, age 19.
- 11 August, *Jean Paillard*, Rochechouart, commercial traveler, age 45.
- 11 August, *Georges Remondet*, Confolens, lieutenant retired on pension, age 54.

## II. Executed In Her Wedding Gown DOCUMENT: Death Certificate

Mayorality of Saint-Quentin (Charente):

Madame PÉNICAUT, née Françoise Charlotte Solange ARMAGNAC, on 23 Feb 18 at Paris, residing in Bel Air, Commune of Exideuil/s/Vienne (Charente), farmer, age 26.

Deceased at Pressac, Commune of Exideuil/s/Vienne, on 5 July 44 at 9 p.m.

Françoise Armagnac was the daughter of Jean Marie Armagnac, a Senate official, and of Ernestine Marie Carnot, niece of Sadi Carnot. Through her mother, she was thus the grandniece of the president of the Republic, who, in 1894, had been assassinated at Lyon by the anarchist Caserio.

Along the Angouême-Limoges main road, in the proximity of Chabonais but within the territory of the commune of Exideuil, Françoise Armagnac lived with her mother in a Basquestyle chalet in the locality of Bel Air. Her uncle, Jean Carnot, resided in a house of imposing size situated in the locality of Savignac. [2] This house, where Françoise and her sister Cécile, coming from Paris, used to spend their vacations, is improperly designated with the term "château" by certain inhabitants of the region, as well as by the ordnance map. Françoise Armagnac, contrary to the legend, was not the mistress of a château.

The narrative you are going to read owes essentially to the oral testimony of her husband and a written account left by her mother. The narrative is followed by sworn statements.

### The Story

The religious wedding of Françoise Armagnac and Georges Pénicaut was celebrated at eleven o'clock in the morning on Tuesday, 4 July 1944, at the church of St-Pierre-ès-Liens de Chabonais. The sparse (?) audience included the Girl Scouts and Jeannettes with whom Françoise busied herself, and whose leader she was. A sermon was delivered by M. Jagueneau, the Catholic priest and dean of Chabonais; less than a month previously, the latter had had dealings with the maquis in connection with the burial of "the Spaniard"; [3] on the afternoon of that same 4 July, he would be slapped in the face by a member of the maquis.

The ceremony went off without incident. To be sure, it seems that disturbing rumors had circulated the night before, but the couple had known nothing of these. Françoise wore a white silk dress, long and full, as well as a diadem of white roses, a white mantilla and her sister Cécile's white burnoose. It was in this wedding outfit, give or take a few items, that she was to be shot to death some thirty hours after the wedding.

The wedding breakfast was planned for the chalet of Bel Air. Instead of taking the main road, the couple and some of the guests took a shortcut across the fields. About 300 meters before reaching the chalet, a very considerable group of *maquisards* (members of the maquis) appeared and began a peremptory questioning of the entire wedding party. To believe the *adjutant* [noncommissioned officer = warrant officer junior grade], all this was a prelude to a simple search; he even added that it would be no more than "a call on the family of a former president of the Republic."

A dozen of the wedding guests were placed under close watch in an outbuilding of the chalet. The Catholic dean was put in a separate room, and it was there that he would be slapped. The photographer, M. Aubineau, was isolated in another room; he was suspected of having photographed the *maquisards* the day they occupied Chabanais. [4]

*Maquisards* seated themselves at the table set up in the main room of the chalet and divided up the wedding breakfast. In the middle of the table there were blue hydrangeas that had been gathered from outside the house, and two bouquets of white roses. The *maquis* distributed cakes and chocolates to the Scouts and Jeannettes.

Around three o'clock in the afternoon the other participants in the wedding would be allowed the cold remains of the meal. At about five o'clock, the guests invited to the wedding feast arrived and in turn were searched. At six o'clock the bride and groom were taken and put into a truck along with the photographer and the Catholic dean. As Françoise had to stand in the truck, one of the *maquis* had gone to find a chair for her from the drawing room. And thus began what, leaning towards her husband, she called "our honeymoon trip." It is unlikely that the couple at that moment really felt themselves in danger. No one attempted anything in their behalf, no doubt precisely because no one feared any fatal consequence. No one save the very young housemaid, Louise V., who declared to Anna, the cook, that Françoise was going to be shot. [5] She said she was a nervous wreck, and that very evening, taking her belongings, she quit the premises. She would not be seen again. She had guided the *maquis* during their search, and it was she who had led them to an etagere where there was a little wooden shoe: in this little shoe an insignia of the Militia was discovered. That at least seems evident from what Mme. Armagnac, Françoise's mother, would hear at the Vayres camp where, a few days later, she in her turn would be interned by the *maquisards*. [6]

The chalet was stripped of all objects of value. Yet the *adjutant* had declared that "not one sou, not one centime would be taken"; that "the *maquis* had no need of anything." "Besides," he had specifically stated, "look at how we're dressed!" But it is probable that on discovering, at the time of the search, seemingly damning evidence against Françoise, the order had been given to "salvage" everything. With the arrival of 126 men (on foot) and two trucks, the *maquisards*, taking one of the trucks, carried off the silverware, the clocks and watches, the family jewels, money, the brandy and the wine, plates and dishes and all the food. In particular, they took M. Armagnac's watch (he had died in 1942) and the contents of the purses of the two children, ages six and eight, who had come to spend their vacation at Bel Air. They left the purses. [7] As for the truck carrying away the prisoners, it traversed Grenord and reached the Pressac château, near Saint-Quentin-sur-Charente. The guards were singing. One of them broke into the "Internationale," but his comrades interrupted him, reminding him that "it is forbidden." The arrival at the château was tumultuous. The *maquisards* were abusive, ready to beat the prisoners black and blue, but "Bernard" came out of the château, a club (?) in his hand, and warned: "I'll clobber the first one who touches them."

The prisoners were placed together in a room on the left of the second story that would serve as their prison. Meanwhile, Françoise was conducted to the infirmary on the right. Her identification papers, her bracelet, her watch, and her engagement ring were taken from her. The famed "nurse" the former maidservant of Mme. Vissol, living in Chabanais -- would be seen, after these events, wearing that engagement ring on her finger.

Françoise and her husband underwent two joint interrogations in the office of Raoux, called "Gandhi," who functioned at one and the same time as examining magistrate, public prosecutor and judge. A diary belonging to Françoise was examined closely: that for 1943, in which she told of having attended the first meetings of the Militia (four meetings in all, it seems). "This is sufficient," Raoux is supposed to have said, showing her the insignia of the Militia.

There were about fifteen men locked up in the prison of the Pressac château. The new arrivals were given nothing to eat; no doubt they had arrived too late. The following day, Wednesday, 5 July, still nothing to eat. Georges Pénicaut was put to work on the charcoal detail. Françoise Pénicaut sewed forage caps in the infirmary. She asked for and obtained a piece of bread. In between their forced labor, the couple succeeded in exchanging a few words. That morning Françoise was summoned twice for questioning. She would confide to her husband that they were forever asking her the same questions and that she was sure she would be condemned. At morning's end, she was told that her execution was for that same evening, whereas Georges would have to be released. Georges obtained an audience with "Bernard." He implored him to take his life in exchange for that of his young wife. Far from yielding, "Bernard" enumerated for him the exhibits which proved Françoise's guilt: her Militia insignia, her diary for 1943, her signed deposition. He even read him an excerpt from the diary in which her joining the Militia was related. Thereupon Georges mentioned the page of the diary where Françoise made reference to the certified letter by which she had sent the Militia her resignation. At once "Bernard" resumed reading the diary; coming to the date of 7 August 1943, he tore out the page and declared to Georges Pénicaut: "The evidence that interests us, we keep; that which does not interest us, we have the duty to disregard." And he added that the execution would not be delayed "by one hour or by one minute."

At 9 o'clock in the evening, Françoise was executed right at the top of the meadow called "The York," behind a thicket and close to a drained fishpond. [9] Before leaving for the place of the execution, she was granted five minutes to wait for her husband, who was not yet back from his fatigue duty. Upon his return, she rushed to him, and they were able to exchange a few words. To the firing squad she is supposed to have declared: "Kill me. I entrust my soul to God." We have several witnesses to her sangfroid. The coup de grâce was supposedly fired by "the nurse." They refused to show Georges the place where his wife's body had been thrown, and he asked for the return of the engagement ring in vain.

Exhumation could not be effected until five months later, in the mud, on 2 December 1944. Today, Françoise Pénicaut has her grave in the cemetery of Chabanais. The inscription on the gravestone reads: "Here lies Françoise Armagnac, wife of Pénicaut, 1918-1944." To her left, the grave of her father bears the words: "Jean Armagnac, born in Paris, deceased at Bel Air, 1872-1942." On her right is the grave of her mother, where one may read: "Marie Armagnac, née Carnot, 1877-1969."

## The Testimonies



*Testimony of Cécile Armagnac, elder sister of the slain woman:*

At the time of the events in question, I was an ambulance nurse in Cherbourg. Because of the battle of Normandy, the town was cut off from the rest of France. I only learned of the marriage and the death of my sister around the end of the month of August 1944, and then only by chance (someone who came from Paris and was passing through Cherbourg had, on hearing my name, offered me his condolences ...). We didn't do anything political, my sister and I. We were both against the occupying forces. The Militia seemed at the time it was created, in 1943, like a sort of civil gendarmerie charged with maintaining order in the country. In an area like ours, where there were, so to speak, no Germans in 1943, the Militia was not considered pro-German, as it later came to be, especially as viewed from Paris or the areas where the members of the Militia and the Germans took part in the same operations of "maintaining order." Besides, Françoise was going to go in for the social work of the Militia, that is to say first aid, packages for the prisoners of war, day nurseries for children. She went, I believe, to only four meetings of the Militia, after which she sent in her resignation as early as 7 August 1943.

I returned to Bel Air on 9 October 1944, that is to say three months after the death of my sister. The area had already been liberated for two months. People were turning their backs on my mother. The tenants were no longer paying her rent. I learned, moreover, that after the Chabanais disaster of 1 August 1944, people had come to Bel Air and commandeered wood and furniture (beds, dressers, wardrobes) for the victims. Among others, B., who was very well known for his Communist opinions, had come looking for furniture. Subsequently we were to be given back only an ebony wardrobe and a mahogany dresser. I also learned that my mother had been taken away and imprisoned by the maquis. She was 67 years old and nearly blind. In a letter addressed to the assessor, she had solicited a reduction in taxes in view of the looting of Bel Air, in which all of her available cash had been taken from her. Her letter had been intercepted. She herself had been arrested, just as the Chabanais tax collector had been. Raoux and other interrogators had tried in vain to make her retract the terms of the letter. Sure of being shot, she resisted them. They also tried to extort a sum of money from her, as they had from a certain G., of Saint- Junien. She told them they had already taken everything from her. Ultimately the *maquisards* released her from the Vayres camp just as they were precipitously departing it. My mother, cutting herself a staff from the hedgerow, marched a good 20 kilometers to get back to Bel Air.

Those events were the product of a troubled era. It wasn't any prettier on the other side. In times like those, actions are often faster than thoughts, with excesses of all kinds as a result. And things leave their mark \_

*Testimony of Robert du Maroussem, former commanding officer of the local Militia:*

I remember that at the end of one of our information briefings, Mlle. Armagnac told us: "You go too far in your attacks on the Jews and the Freemasons; they're hunted like wild animals these days."

*Testimony of Mme T., former domestic of the Pressac château:*

When the truck arrived at the château, the maquis, in order to mock her, cried: "Long live the bride!" She slept in a loft. They made her clean the toilets and sew clothing. Her dress was soiled. When she crossed the yard, they continued to cry: "Long live the bride!" A young fellow who was a member of the firing squad was impressed by her courage. It seems that she opened the front of her burnoose and told them: "Fire away!"

*Testimony of Nathan Lindner, instigator of the arrest:*

[In her written statement, Mme. Armagnac names the "newspaper vendor Lannaire (sic), born in Warsaw and a refugee in Chabanais." She adds that this man directed the looting of Bel Air and that he personally carried off "the genealogical tables of the Carnot family." He supposedly boasted of the "Joli coup" he had pulled off and exclaimed: "Won't they think I'm something after that!" -- I managed to find Nathan Lindner on 14 May 1974. He was then living in the Halles quarter of Paris and had a newspaper stand at the corner of Tiquetonne and Montorgueil streets. Born in Warsaw in July of 1902, he had been a corporal in the Foreign Legion (height: 1.59 m). During the war of 1939-1940, he had worked in Toulouse for *Paris Soir*; later, because of the Vichy racial laws, he had worked in Issoudun (Indre) for himself. He finally went back to Chabanais, where he peddled newspapers for the Hachette Store run by Mme. Olivaux. Known by the nickname "Trottinette," in the Resistance he used the pseudonym "Linard."]

I had to leave the Chabanais area in 1945 on account of those stories of the Liberation. The newspapers of the time, and especially *L'Essor du Centre-Ouest*, had violently attacked me. A good many years later it was *Historia* that lit into me.

In 1944, at Chabanais, I took delivery of the newspapers at the railroad station and brought them to the Olivaux store. I had a pushcart fitted out with bookshelves. That's why they nicknamed me "Trottinette" [scooter]. One day I hear her say something like: "These young people who refuse the S.T.O. [Service du Travail Obligatoire = Compulsory Work Service] should be doused with gasoline and set on fire." Other people could confirm that for you. [10] One of my newspapers was *Signal*, the only review comparable to today's *Match*. [11]

I was the one who talked to Bernard about Françoise Armagnac. I asked to take care of the search and the rest of it. Bernard gave me carte blanche. When the wedding party got to within 300 meters of the Armagnac property, I told them that we were members of the maquis and not looters, and I read an order that said any man caught pillaging would be shot immediately. We set up the operation on the same day as the wedding in the hope that we'd find other members of the Militia among the guests. In the course of the search we discovered appointment books, armbands, insignia [12], a Militia membership card. I took the bride to Raoux, who, provided with my written report, conducted the questioning and decided on the execution.

[13]???

What I did that day was perhaps not very pretty. I entered into history through the death of a descendant of Sadi Carnot. I'm not pleased

about it. It had to be done at the time. I'm not a bloodthirsty person; feelings were running very high and people weren't in any state to be reasoned with.

But right now we have lots of people who are doing a lot of harm [now, in 1974]. They ought to have been executed at the time instead of being liberated and whitewashed. All these people besmirch and denigrate the Resistance.

The witness appeared to me to be tormented by the "Armagnac Affair." He does not regret having had the bride shot, but he deplors the vexations that ensued for him. He says he was always a Communist and affirms that he was expelled from the Party in 1945 for having wanted, contrary to instructions, to help the Spanish Reds arm themselves in order to liberate Spain from the yoke of Franco. Among those Reds, there was "Ramon." Nathan Lindner is mad for history and painting; he paints under a pseudonym (Ainel, as in N[athan] L[indner]).

*Testimony of Annie F., former "Wolf Cub" scoutmistress:*

Françoise Armagnac was an idealist and an enthusiast, an ungainly girl, eccentric and sometimes careless in dress. Very much the churchgoer, she was brusque in manner; she was very peremptory, and perhaps timid at bottom. Politics didn't interest her. Once, speaking to me about a movement, perhaps of the Militia's social work or women's movement, she told me that in an age like ours, you couldn't remain indifferent, that this movement looked interesting and that one ought to be able to make oneself useful in it. Someone was it her mother or was it perhaps myself cautioned her and counseled her to get the advice of the Scouts at the national level.[\[14\]](#)

On 4 July 1944, I witnessed the removal of the Armagnac family belongings in the *maquisards'* truck. Children were playing on the slope of the meadow; it was the "Wolf Cubs" and the Girl Scouts.

*Testimony of Joseph L., former president of the Legion:*

At one moment, at Bel Air, young Valette, who was one of the *maquisards*, cried out: "The Germans are coming! There are the swastikas!" It was Scout crosses. [\[15\]](#)

*Testimony of the widow of Lieutenant Robert, chief of operations:*

[Lieutenant Robert's true name was Jean P. He was a farmer at Les Fayards, a commune of Étagnac. His widow now (1974) has an antique shop in the Paris region, at Saint-Mandé.]

My husband has just died of cancer at the age of 52. I met him after the Liberation. He was a croupier then. For two seasons he directed the casino of L. I wasn't familiar with the Resistance in Charente. I don't come from there. My husband was always a Communist. He never talked, so to speak, about his memories of the maquis. He was sickened by the ill that was spoken of the Resistance. Basically, he really began to talk about the maquis only during the eight months in the hospital preceding his death. He talked especially about "Gustave" (Bricout), and then he also spoke about a marquise or a countess that had been shot. He was there. I don't remember well at all. Hadn't that woman denounced some Frenchmen? My husband thought that it was just ... I think that my husband didn't agree all that much ... " [\[16\]](#)

*Testimony of G.B., of Montbron, alleged witness to the execution:*

Then the bride opened her veil and she called out just like that: "Long live Germany!" [\[17\]](#)

*Testimony of "Bernard," commander of the "Pressac maquis" [or maquis "Bernard"]:*

The bride? She was secretary of the Confolens Militia. [\[18\]](#) She told me: "You've got the better of me, but if I had got the better of you, it would be no different."

*Testimony of "Gaston," chauffeur for "Bernard":*

I took part in the arrest of the Carnot girl. A sensational girl. Facing the firing squad, she took hold of her wedding dress like this [gesture with both hands of baring the throat]. She never lowered her eyes. She was a *chef de centaine* in the Militia. [\[19\]](#)

*The "Armagnac Affair" recounted by Robert Aron:*

[*Histoire de l'Épuration*, volume I, "Les Grandes Études Contemporaines," Fayard, 664 pp., 1967, pp.566-567.]

Perhaps the most detestable acts of violence are those which attack women. Near Limoges, a young woman of the region, Mlle. d'Armagnac, whose family are proprietors of a château, gets married in the church of her village: when she comes out on the parvis from the mass, *maquisards* kidnap her, her husband, the priest who married them, and a witness. At dawn the next day she is shot to death in her wedding gown. Motives given: first, she is a chatelaine; in the second place, she has taken care of militiamen. [\[20\]](#)

*Testimony of P. Clerfeuille, Professor at Angoulême:*

You know, it is very difficult to do this work on the Repression. People don't want to talk. Let us take an example. I am positive that a woman was shot to death in her wedding gown. I went to Chabanais to investigate. I have an official card for doing this kind of work: I'm a corresponding member of the Committee on the History of the Second World War. We are under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister. Well, they refused to give me the name of the woman who was shot! I went away without a thing. And nevertheless I know that woman existed.

[P. Clerfeuille is officially charged, among other labors, with research on the Repression at the Liberation (i.e., on the Purge) in the department of Charente. Our interview took place in 1974, say seven years after the publication of the Robert Aron book.]

## Two Documents

1. First Battalion, 2406th Company. 4 July 1944

### Report of the Company Lieutenant [21]

Today 7/4/44 we carried out a large-scale operation at the Armagnac château; place known as Petit Chevrier [22] concerning the possible arrest of militiamen. The operation was completely crowned with success because we arrested a militiawoman. This woman was getting married today and we came at the height of the wedding or at least at the arrival of the wedding party. We interrogated the guests one after the other, and I personally verified their identity and all the papers that were in their possession as well as their wallets. After verification, I detained a photographer named Aubinot [23] who allegedly photographed the maquis the day we occupied Chabanais. This requires a serious investigation at his domicile.

I also detained the Priest of Chabanais who had prevented the bringing of flowers and wreaths and the flag into his church. [24]

Afterwards we kept a close watch on the Bridegroom and the Bride for having answered us spitefully concerning the work we were doing at their home. Then we made a regulation search without damaging anything up to the moment when we found the evidence that the Bride is a Militiawoman. And so from that instant I all but gave the men a free hand for the removal of the provisions and other things worth our while.

When everything was loaded, we had the prisoners get into the trucks and we returned without incident.

I am satisfied with that expedition because I saw my men at work and I see that I can count on them.

As for my *Adjutant-Chef* [senior warrant officer] Linard, [25] I can only thank him for having mounted this expedition and to have supervised it so well. Also, with the consent of the commanding captain of the battalion, I shall request that he be named company adjutant.

In the evening a German airplane flew over the camp at a low altitude and on its way to Pressignac loosed a few bursts of machine-gun fire on civilians.

Signed: Robert

2. First Battalion / Intelligence Service -- Activity of the Intelligence Service the 7th of July 1944.  
Closure of the inquiry into the claims for money and real estate of the Armagnac family.

8 July 1944 Chief of Intelligence Service

Signed: Gaudy [26]

### III. Some Executions of the Maquis "Chabanne" (4 July to 17 August 1944)

This maquis was started by three teachers from the secondary school of Chasseneuil: André Chabanne, Guy Pascaud and Lucette Nebout. These three were later joined by a career military man: Jean-Pierre Rogez. André Chabanne died in an accident in 1963. His body rests in the crypt of the Memorial of the Chasseneuil Resistance beside the body of Bernard Lelay, head of the maquis "Bernard." Guy Pascaud was arrested on 22 March 1944 and deported; upon his return from deportation, he embarked on a political career; he died some years ago. Lucette Nebout changed her name following a remarriage; she is still living. After the war, Jean-Pierre Rogez had a brilliant military career; he was chief of staff of a general in command of the Paris garrison. On his retirement, he embarked on a political career and became for a time the mayor of Malaucène (Vaucluse). In the summary of his service record are these four words: "tortured by the Gestapo." The truth is that he was accidentally knocked off his motorbike by a German military vehicle.

The maquis "Chabanne" -- also called "Bir Hacheim, AS 18" -- killed less but tortured more than the neighboring Communist maquis "Bernard." The responsibility for its executions or tortures is also more diverse, divided between André Chabanne and a few members of his entourage, in particular François-Abraham Bernheim (of Colmar) and the former Saint-Cyr cadet, Jean-Pierre Rogez. Bernheim, of Jewish extraction -- as was Raoux, his counterpart for the maquis "Bernard" -- directed the *Deuxième Bureau* (Security and Intelligence) until one day when André Chabanne dismissed him, probably because he found him too severe.

Whereas in the case of the victims of the Communist maquis almost all the bodies have been exhumed, the victims of the maquis "AS" ("Secret Army") have not all been exhumed, and it is with full knowledge of the case that the authorities persist in refusing these exhumations. In the commune of Montemboeuf, at the locality known as "the fox holes," near the old Jayat mill, there are bodies which have never been claimed, and others which have been claimed but which the authorities do not want exhumed.

The most astonishing of the executions carried out by the maquis "Chabanne" are those of the "Couture Seven" as well as that of Father Albert Heymès and his servant (see below, pp. 23-26).

Couture (280 inhabitants in 1944) is a village situated north of Angoulême, at the beginning of *Charente poitevine*, in the proximity of Mansles and Aunac. In June of 1944, a skirmish between German and Militia troops on one side and a small detachment of the maquis "Chabanne" (five persons in all) on the other resulted in one dead on the side of the maquis.

The couple in charge of this little detachment were convinced that the inhabitants of Couture had denounced them, and Chabanne had ended up having seven persons of the village arrested: a father and son, another father and son, two brothers, and a seventh man. All were tortured, as a Military Justice report would establish after the war. All were shot at Cherves-Chatelars, near Montemboeuf, on 4 July 1944. The bodies were thrown into a cesspool. It would take their families 28 years of petitioning to obtain the exhumation of the bodies and their transfer in secret to the Couture cemetery. Proof of the denunciation was never produced. The presence of this small maquis was a matter of public knowledge in the region.

In the period from 4 July to 17 August 1944, and limiting myself strictly to the region where it was then to be found, this maquis carried out around 50 executions.

Of the 50 cases, seven were women (one of them was 77 years old; she was shot along with her sister, 70 years of age, and the latter's husband, age 73, a cripple on crutches). There were also four members of a single gypsy family (one of them a woman) among the victims, and three German soldiers, including one who tried to escape.

- 4 July, *Louis-André Michaud*, age 34, warrant officer pilot on armistice leave, killed at Labon, commune of Chasseneuil.
- 4 July, seven farmers from Couture executed at Cherves, all after torture:
  - Léon Barret*, age 38, brother of the following.
  - Eugène Barret*, age 32, brother of the preceding.
  - Émilien Gachet*, age 61, father of the following.
  - Émile Gachet*, age 23, son of the preceding.
  - Frédéric Dumouss(e)aud*, age 63, father of the following.
  - Marcel Dumouss(e)aud*, age 35, son of the preceding.
  - Albéric Maindron*, age 32.
- 5 July, ? *Aurance*, executed at Cherves.
- -5 July, unknown male, executed at Cherves.
- 6 July, *Joseph Grangeaud*, age 68, tradesman, executed at Cherves.
- 6 July, *Édouard Lombreuil*, age 61, insurance broker, executed at Cherves.
- 6 July, *André Abadie*, age 33, former stevedore at Bordeaux (?), executed at Cherves.
- 10 July, *Jean Veyret-Logerias*, age 67, town clerk, executed at Cherves.
- 11 July, *Father Albert Heymès*, died by torture, or following torture, at the Priory of Chatelars.
- 13 or 14 July, *Nicolas Becker*, age 57, pharmacy assistant, executed at Chez-Fourt, commune of La Tâche.
- 16 July, *Ernest Schuster*, age 24, interpreter at the *Kommandantur* [garrison headquarters] of La Rochefoucauld, tortured and executed at Cherves.
- 26 July, *Jean Dalaçon*, age 49, watchmaker, executed at Cherves.
- 26 July, *Jean Niedzella*, age 24 (?), killed at Cherves.
- 29 July, then 30 July for the last of them, four itinerants of the same family (gypsy), killed near Saint-Claud:
  - Jules Ritz*, age 50.
  - Pauline Jauzert*, age 57.
  - Émile Ritz*, age 22.
  - François Ritz*, age 24.
- end of July, three German soldiers were taken prisoner. The sergeant tried to escape; he was killed. His two comrades were fetched, and also killed. The marks of the bullets are still there on the exterior wall of the covered playground of the school at Cherves. The three dead bodies were thrown into a pond "chez Veyret"; they remained in the pond for at least ten years -- with their feet sticking out.
- 1 August, *Joséphine Adam*, age 29, servant of Father Heymès, executed at Cherves.
- August, *Marie-Germain Groulade*, age 48, housewife, executed at Cherves.
- The following executions took place at the "fox holes" near the old mill at Jayat, in the commune of Montemboeuf, where Jean-Pierre Rogez had his command post and where he had a "concentration camp" (its official designation) set up:
  - 7 August, *Maurice Launay*, age 25, farm domestic; his wife (Mme. Horenstein, of Objat) did not succeed in obtaining exhumation.
  - 9 or 10 August, *Mlle. Clémence Choyer*, age 65, retired school-teacher, no family; not exhumed.
  - 10 August, *Augustine Alexandrine Bossu*, age 77, almost blind, sister-in-law of the following.
  - 10 August, *Victor Maisonneuve*, age 73, invalid needing two canes, husband of the following.
  - 10 August, *Juliette Henriette Maisonneuve*, age 70, wife of the preceding.
  - 11 August, *Marie Brénichot*, age 46, tradeswoman.
  - 14 or 15 August, *Joseph Schneider*, age 25, interpreter at the *Kommandantur* of Champagne-Mouton, tortured; not exhumed.
  - 14 or 15 August, *Paulette Marguerite François*, age 27, owner of a cafe; not exhumed.
  - -15 August, 6 or 7 or 9 Russian volunteers in the German army were executed; no exhumations despite negotiations.
  - 16 August, *Raphaël Gacon*, age 18 (?), "half day-laborer, half sacristan"; not exhumed.
  - 17 August, *Emmanuel Giraud*, age 24, farm domestic; not exhumed, despite the apparent request of a brother.
  - It might be well to add to this list the name of *Octave Bourdy*, age 53, a grocer, executed belatedly, on 6 December in terrifying circumstances at Saint-Claud.

#### IV. Death of a Priest Under Torture

Before the execution by the maquis "Chabanne" of the seven inhabitants of Couture, the curé of Saint-Front, Father Albert Heymès, went there and expressed his feelings in a form I have been unable to determine. As a priest serving several parishes, he was coming from celebrating Mass in one of them; and it was on the return journey, at Saint-Front, that he was presumably stopped, along with his servant, Joséphine, and taken by truck to André Chabanne's command post at Chatelars, an estate "the Priory" flanked by the remains of an abbey (not to be confused with "Le Logis du Chatelars," which is a château). It was his misfortune that Albert Heymès was a refugee from the



East [27] and spoke with a strong German accent. He was born on 4 November 1901 at Kappelkingen, near Sarralbe, in Moselle.

At Colmar, François-Abraham Bernheim, still living, told me concerning him:

Heymès, I knew him well in 1936 and then in 1939 at Altrippe (where he was the curé). I lived in his village. He spoke the patois of Lorraine, the worst of the German dialects: the "paexer"; originally it's Luxemburgian (that dialect, it's enough to sicken you). Heymès was a bit ponderous, a bit coarse. He was not unlikable but he had a bad PR. (I don't know anything about his death.) I suppose he fell on his back when he was struck and presumably split open the back of his skull. I was the judge. There was no attorney. I made an impression because I didn't shout. A man blanches and his eyes glitter, when you tell him he's going to die.

For some inhabitants of the Moselle region, the former curé of Altrippe was intelligent, a musician, a big talker with an irritating style. "If he had stayed in Lorraine, it would have been the Germans who'd have cut off his head."

M. was a member of the maquis and saw the truck arrive with the priest: "They didn't set up the steps for him. That struck me. You have respect for a curé as you do for a teacher. He had his prayer book. He appealed to the good Lord for help ... But he confessed that he was a member of the Wehrmacht [*sic*]."

M., of Chasseneuil, told me: "It wasn't a pigsty they put him in, but a shed for sheep. They made him carry stones. A *maquisard* said to me: 'This one will be good for making a beef stew tomorrow.' He said that to me on a Thursday; well, Sunday it was he, the *maquisard*, who had been killed. This curé was a noncom in the German army."

G., of Cherves, stated to me: "I saw him carrying very big stones and beaten by his guards. He had tears in his eyes."

Two brothers took a leading role in the torture. I found one of these brothers, a tradesman, at Gond-Pontouvre, a suburb of Angoulême. I told him the results of my investigation. He stated to me: "He was tortured very severely but there was neither a rope nor a hot iron. When I came back with X. to the pigsty where the curé was, we found him motionless. We lifted his eyelids. We verified his death and concluded that he must have committed suicide with a ring."

And, as I asked for an explanation of the ring, the man answered: "I refuse to say anything more about it to you. I won't say any more about it unless Bonnot is willing to talk. See Bonnot."

This last, a well-known official of the maquis "Chabanne," refused to give me any information.

The priest's family refused to reply to my questions for fear of dealing with someone who was perhaps seeking, in the terms of a letter dated 2 June 1974, to "go along with the anticlerical propaganda of the age."

Albert Heymès died on or about 11 July 1944; he was 42 years old. His body was buried in the cemetery of Cherves-Chatelars. His name is graven in the stone: "Father Albert Heymès [*sic*] / 1901-1944." The bishopric of Metz did not desire exhumation and transfer of the body to Lorraine. The grave is totally neglected. His servant, Joséphine Adam, was executed on the 1st of August, together with another woman. At Chatelars I was often told she "cried a great deal." They had afflicted her with a placard reading: "Curé's Wife."

Nowadays the children of Cherves-Chatelars and the region are nurtured on the hallowed history of the Resistance. A plaque which indicated the dates of the birth and death of André Chabanne has been replaced with another no longer indicating the dates, giving the impression that the hero died in the war, whereas he died in an accident in 1963. Directly in front of the dwelling called "the Priory," in which Father Albert Heymès was tortured to death, and where many other persons had been imprisoned or tortured or condemned to death, schoolchildren have planted a fir tree. A plaque reads: "Tree planted 3 September 78/ by the children of Cherves-Chatelars in memory of the maquis Bir Hacheim /AS 18/ which was formed in this place/ in September 1943."

In the schoolyard of the Cherves school there is a playground. On the playground's exterior wall, along the road which leads from Cherves to Chasseneuil, there can still be clearly seen, more than forty years after the events, bullet marks: it was here that the three German soldiers were executed. Upon being informed of this execution, André Chabanne flew into a rage. He remembered, he said, that, taken prisoner by the Germans in 1940, he had escaped and been recaptured; his life was spared.

Nevertheless, ten years after the execution of the three Germans, André Chabanne had left their cadavers to lie in a nearby pond, "chez Veyret." Neither the owners of the pond, nor the mayor of Cherves, nor the gendarmes dared intervene in order that they be given a burial. Today ten or so bodies are still buried in the "foxholes" at the old Jayat mill, for exhuming them would mean exhuming a part of the truth in contradiction to the legend that grows stronger year by year. Even at Saint-Front, I interrogated a group of four women, the oldest of whom was a young child in 1944. I asked them what they knew about Father Heymès, the former curé of their village. The oldest one answered me: "That curé was no curé. The Germans put him there to keep an eye on us. He was there to spy." Two of the other three women approved. Other people told me: "He wore a German uniform under his cassock"; or again, "A fine curé, he was! Under his cassock he wore the uniform of a captain in the SS."

It is not difficult these days to find historians of serious repute who peddle even worse nonsense than that. It may nonetheless be true that Albert Heymès had served in the German army in the course of the first World War, during the period when his native province was part of Germany.

- [1] [The Milice (French: *Milice française* ) was founded as an anti-maquis force by military hero (in both world wars) Jacques Darnand in January, 1943. -- Ed.]
- [2] Pronounced *Savignat* , in conformity with the original spelling. A century ago, a great many place-names of the region found themselves provided with the suffix -ac instead of the suffix -at.
- [3] A member of the maquis.
- [4] After the confiscation of his camera, valued at 60,000 francs, he will have no choice but to join the Maquis. He will be killed in the Royan pocket.
- [5] Anna was to testify to this after the war, to the investigators of the *Sécurité militaire*.
- [6] Louise V. is living today (1974) in Limoges, where she married a hairdresser. She has two daughters, one of whom is a teacher and the other an engineer (elsewhere than at Limoges). Her father was a Communist.
- [7] After the war, investigations of the *Sécurité militaire* will establish facts of this sort. Cécile Armagnac disclosed to us that it was out of concern not to excite bitter feelings that Madame Armagnac renounced having the property returned to her (" ... anyway, that would not have returned Françoise to us"); as for the other property, the indemnity collected by Madame Armagnac seems to have been very modest.
- [8] The special Algiers legislation, like the appeals of the London Radio and in particular those of Maurice Schumann, sanctioned, it seems, this kind of distinction.
- [9] In 1944 France was on Central Europe time: 9 p.m. thus corresponded to 7 p.m. solar time.
- [10] The persons questioned, including those most hostile to the Militia, told us emphatically that Françoise Armagnac seemed to them incapable of making any such remarks, either in substance or form. We state here that witness Lindner seemed to us subject to grave shortcomings on points other than just the "Armagnac Affair."
- [11] This mention of *Signal* is astonishing. Even more astonishing is the comparison with *Match* (or *Paris-Match* ). *Signal* was a weekly of very good quality but one that many French people refused to buy on account of its German and National Socialist character. Yet Nathan Lindner was selling it, or trying to sell it, in Chabanais. The sale of it was not compulsory, of course, any more than was its purchase. Françoise Armagnac had forbidden the children she looked after to buy anything at all from Trottinette, who was guilty, in her eyes, of selling *Signal* as well as publications of a licentious nature.
- [12] In all probability these armbands and insignia were ... Guide insignia (with the exception of that found in the little wooden shoe).
- [13] A probable confusion with the insignia found in the little wooden shoe.
- [14] According to her sister Cécile, Françoise, receiving no response -- the mail was operating under precarious conditions -- made her decision without waiting any longer.
- [15] This confusion seems to have been produced elsewhere in France; see also the confusion between "cheftaine" and "chef de centaine"; that is to say, between a Scout rank and a rank in the Militia!
- [16] These two last phrases offer an example of the contradictions that we sometimes encountered in the course of our inquiry when a witness attempted to formulate a general judgment.
- [17] We relate this matter only to give the reader an idea of the conviction of certain witnesses. As was to be revealed later, G.B. was not present at that scene, despite his claim.
- [18] Françoise Armagnac was never the secretary of the Militia of Confolens. The sentiment the witness attributes to her is unlikely for someone who had broken with the Militia by sending in her resignation eleven months previously. As for the extreme brevity of this testimony, it is due to the fact that at the time of our meeting with "Bernard" we had not yet gathered much information about the executions and, in particular, about this one.
- [19] "Gaston," or Jean T. by his true name, nowadays lives near Saint Victournien (Haute-Vienne). Françoise was not a *chef de centaine* but a *cheftaine*. The witness is confusing here a modest rank in the Girl Scouts with an important rank in the armed Militia!
- [20] The attentive reader will be able to point out half a dozen errors in this summary of the affair. These errors may be explained by the fact that Robert Aron, who is a generalist, could not devote himself to exhaustive verification of each case. Some of the errors are perhaps also to be accounted for by the force of attraction of certain clichés or stereotypes that call for one another and give the story the stark simplicity and dramatic color that are to the taste of certain readers of novels: "acts of violence ... detestable ... descend upon women ... young woman ... Mlle d'Armagnac [*sic*] ... family ... proprietor ... château ... gets married ... church ... her village ... coming out of the mass ... parvis ... kidnapping ..." In a context like that, we are not too much surprised to see the execution take place "the next day at dawn" (whereas, it will be remembered, François Armagnac, interrogated several times on the day following her arrest, was not executed until nine o'clock p.m.).
- [21] We are correcting the accentuation, but not the spelling or the punctuation of this document, every phrase of which would merit an attentive reading.
- [22] In fact, it was not Petit Chevrier but Bel Air.
- [23] The correct spelling is Aubineau.
- [24] For the burial of the "Spaniard", the two Devoyon brothers, of Chabanais, had made a coffin for him that was considered too short; they were both executed.
- [25] Pseudonym of Nathan Lindner.
- [26] Cécile Armagnac, to whom we showed this document in 1975, deems it suspect. She cannot imagine that her mother could put forward a claim of that kind within two or three days after the arrest of Françoise and the "removal" of Bel Air.

[27] [Meant is the French East, i.e. the regions of Alsace and Lorraine, which were ceded to Germany in 1871, and re-annexed by France in 1918. They changed hands again during the Second World War. -- Ed.]

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